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PRESENTATION BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
TO THE JUNIOR OFFICER TRAINEES  
3 OCTOBER 1958

On the Lure of Intelligence

It was while I was stationed in Switzerland as a World War I Foreign Service Officer that I got my start and my vast interest in intelligence. I kept trying to get away before it took hold of me, but I never succeeded very well. For some periods of time I was in the practice of law, and then I would get borrowed back for assignments in various fringes of the field. Eight or ten years ago I would not have predicted that I would be here today talking to you, although if I'd been wise I might well have predicted it. In 1948 the President - that would have been President Truman; I was then practicing law in New York after my experience in the OSS - asked me whether I would not head up a small committee to look into the newly organized Central Intelligence Agency, study the law under which it was organized and what had been done with it, and see whether the organization, then a little over a year old, was on the right track. Well, that always seems easy, and when the President asks you to do a thing you usually do it. So, with a couple of fellow-lawyers designated by the President - Bill [redacted] whom you probably know and who performed distinguished service here some years ago, and another lawyer named Matt Correa - I spent odd moments over the next year analyzing and studying the situation here. We drew up a beautiful report which, like all reports, found its proper place in the files, and we were praised for our magnificent work, and nothing very much happened.

Then about a year after that Bedell Smith came down. He began dusting off the files; he'd heard about this report, so he took it out and read it. He seemed to think it wasn't too bad, so he got hold of [redacted] and 25X1A9a me (Matt Correa was not in the running at that time for some legal reason or other) and said, "Damn you, you wrote this report. Now come down and tell me how to put it into effect. It'll only take six weeks." So in November of 1950 I came down to Washington for six weeks and I've never gone back. I commuted for the first week or two, hopefully; but I found that didn't work. And here I am after eight full years.

I merely recite these little anecdotes to give you some idea of what I am sure you will discover yourselves, the tremendous appeal of the work.

On Knowledge for Freedom

As you know, we are putting up a new building here. Red White does most of the work on it, but we're all working very hard with a view to proper housing for our intelligence complex, one which will get us all together so we can operate more effectively. We hope that in two years or so it will be an accomplished fact. I have always had in mind that when we get that building, if I'm still around to help at that time - and God willing, I

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shall be - to put on the front of it this motto from somewhere in the Bible, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall keep you free." Some translations have it "shall make you free," but the result is the same. The fact is that without a basic understanding and knowledge of what is going on in the world - and that requires first of all intelligence - we are not likely to remain free.

We are in a world today where you can't make too many mistakes. That is one of the reasons why this Agency exists, and one of the reasons why it is absolutely vital in our form of government: because, after all, policy has to be based on fact, and the fact is not always easy to get at. Fact cannot be got at without a great deal of effort and study. Then we also have certain duties and functions beyond the field of intelligence, those of building up an organism which can meet the Communist menace in the covert field on a world-wide basis. And that of course is tied into intelligence, because you can't operate until you know your target and are able to move against it effectively.

I think that in the last few years, the last decade, a tremendous change has come about in the stature and status of intelligence. Today policies are not adopted until we in the intelligence field have had a chance to prepare our estimates and our appraisals of the situation which go to the National Security Council. The daily bulletins we send to the President and to the leading policy-makers of the Government have become "must" reading. They are based on intelligence collected on a world-wide basis, not only by us but by others. And whenever the National Security Council meets, generally every Thursday, I have the opportunity, or General Cabell has, if I am away, to take as much time as the situation requires to give the President and the Vice-President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, and others at the National Security Council a review of the developments in the world over the last week which have important policy implications or which may require quick and effective policy action.

This Agency, in some ways, is an outgrowth of the OSS of the last war. That war proved, if there was any need of proof, the absolute need of an Agency of this kind, and the OSS experience also proved the necessity for trained people if the work was to be carried out. In those days we didn't have much time for training; we were thrown right into the middle of a vortex of military and paramilitary operations on a world-wide basis, backed up by intelligence operations. But the result was that when that war was over, everyone at the policy level, including the President, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State, decided that there must be a permanent organization to do this work in peacetime and be prepared, if the situation came, to do effective work in time of war. Such an organization has been sanctioned now by law, dedicated by law, and the permanence of the organization is keyed to the permanence of the need for it.

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On Challenge and Accomplishment

As I've rather indicated, I am sure that you are all going to find that the work has a tremendous pull and a tremendous fascination. It's obvious it has some difficulties, the difficulty for example that it requires a certain amount of anonymity with respect to certain features, with respect to certain individuals in the service. That is not always easy to take, but I know you can and will take it where it is necessary. We cannot always advertise abroad what we do and what we've accomplished, even though it may become known. But public stories are only incidents to the profession.

On the other side there is the fact that the work contains within itself, I believe, more interest, more pull, more requirement for dedication than any other line of work. To meet the need for trained people we organized some years ago this program, the Junior Officer Training Program, and we have sought to bring into its classes year by year the most able and the most dedicated type of individual we can possibly find. It is among your ranks and those of your predecessors that we expect to look, and shall look, for those who will take over the important jobs in this Agency. We want to make this a real career for you, and we want to open the door of career service to those of you who seek it.

I have just come back, myself, from a trip I took around Europe to talk to our people there and see how they are getting on. Every time I do this I run across one or two or three extraordinary people, ones I hadn't heard of before, doing perfectly unique things, young men not much older than you who already have accomplished wonders. I ran across one fellow who was put into a very difficult position: he had to try to change the trend in a government office in a certain country from complacency toward Communism to effective action against Communism; and he had succeeded. I asked him how he had achieved the position of influence to do this. "Well," he said, "I found that the Minister in this particular office wanted to learn English, so I thought the way to get to know this man and to get some influence over him was to teach him English." So he taught him English; and in the meantime he established himself in a position of the most extraordinary trust and confidence. He has in effect changed the whole attitude of a great ministry in a great and important country.

There are many others like him that I've seen as I have traveled around. I'm proud, very proud, of the type of people we have and what they are accomplishing, the ingenuity they are showing in getting over the difficulties and the problems at their various posts and in their various assignments, whether in the jungles of Indonesia or in places not quite so difficult as far as physical conditions are concerned but maybe more difficult from the point of view of human relations. We are up against tough competition. The training the Soviet Union is giving to those who are dedicated to the spread of Communism and to the carrying on of subversive activities far exceeds in time and thoroughness, I fear, what we are able to give. While we have been treated generously by the Congress as far as funds are concerned, we still do not have anything like what our competitors have in Asia.

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But competition is the breath of life. If any of you have read the works of Toynbee, whom I know very well personally, you may not always agree with his history, but there is one theme that he has propounded in studying civilizations from the early days of the pyramids up until the present time - the theory of challenge and response. Those countries which have responded to the challenge have persisted and those which have not responded to the challenge have failed. It is those who have met the hardest challenge and have succeeded that have the brightest future. You are part of an organization and a part of a government that is faced today with a challenge of this nature. You are important cogs in the machinery set up to meet this challenge, and when I have a chance to talk with you I always feel encouraged to believe that we can effectively meet it.

Thank you very much.

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